Draupadi instructs Satyabhama

Narrator: When the noble Pandavas and the Brahmanas had taken their seats, Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas and Satyabhama, the favorite wife of Lord Krsna and the daughter of Satrajit entered the assembly. O listeners, with hearts full of joy, they laughed merrily and they seated themselves at their ease. Those ladies who always spoke sweetly to each other, having met after a long time, began to talk upon various delightful topics arising out of the history of the Kurus and the Yadus.

Satyabhama: How fares those heroes who are imbued with strength and beauty and who are like the Lokapalas themselves? O beautiful lady, how is it that your husbands are so obedient to you and that they are never angry with you? O lady of lovely features, the Pandavas are all watchful to do your bidding. Tell me its reason. Is it vows or asceticism or incantations? Is it due to a drug in your season or the efficacy of science or the influence of youthful appearance? Do you practice the recitation of a particular formulae or use some sort of Homa, collyrium or other medicine? Tell me, O Panchala Princess, of that blessed and auspicious method by which my husband Krsna may be ever obedient to me.

Draupadi: O Satyabhama, you ask of the practices of wicked women. When the husband learns that the wife is addicted to incantations and drugs - from that day he begins to dread her as if a poisonous snake has entered his sleeping chamber. Can a man afflicted with fear have peace? How can one who has no peace have happiness? A husband can never be made obedient by a wife with the help of mantras.

We hear of painful diseases transmitted by enemies. Those that desire to kill others send poisons in the shape of gifts so that the man takes the powders by tongue or skin and is deprived of his life. Women have sometimes caused dropsy and leprosy, increpitude, impotency and idiocy, blindness and deafness in men by administering drugs to enchant them. Those wicked women, ever treading in the path of sin, so sometimes injure their husbands.

O illustrious Satyabhama, hear now of my conduct towards the

noble Pandavas.

Abandoning vanity and subduing desire and wrath, I always serve, with devotion, the Pandavas, with all their wives. Restraining jealousy, with devotion of heart and without any feeling of degradation at the service I perform, I always serve my husbands.

Ever fearing to utter what is evil and false or to look or sit or walk with impropriety or to cast glances indicative of the feelings of the heart, I serve the sons of Pritha, those mighty warriors as blazing as the sun or fire and as handsome as the moon. My heart is never attracted to any other, be they celestials, men or Gandharvas, young and handsome or wealthy and adorned with ornaments.

I never bathe or eat or sleep until he that is my husband has bathed or eaten or slept and until all his servants and followers have eaten, bathed or slept.

Whether returning from the field, the forest or the town or hastily rising up, I always salute my husband with water and a seat.

I always keep the house, the household articles and the food that is to be taken well-ordered and clean. I carefully cook the rice and serve the food at the proper time.

I am never angry. I never speak harsh words. I never imitate women that are wicked. Avoiding idleness, I always do what is agreeable.

I never laugh except at a jest. I never stay for a long time at the gate of the house. I never stay long in places of nature's call or in the pleasure gardens of the house.

I always refrain from laughing loudly or indulging in high passion and from everything that may give offense. O Satyabhama, I am always engaged in serving my husbands.

A separation from my husband is never agreeable to me. When my husbands leave home to go to my relatives, I give up flowers and fragrant paste of every kind and I undergo

penance.

Whatever my husband does not drink, whatever he does not eat, whatever my husband does not enjoy - I always renounce. O beautiful lady, adorned with ornaments and ever self-controlled by the instructions received by me, I always seek the welfare of my husbands. I always perform those duties that my mother-in-law formerly told me in respect of relatives.

Also, I always perform my duties in respect of alms-giving, of offering worship to the celestials, of offering oblations to the Pitris, of boiling food on auspicious days in order to serve it to the Pitris and the guests, those that deserve our respect and all other recipients that are known to me.

I always perform my duties night and day without the least idleness. Having my heart firmly fixed in humility and fixed in approved rules, I always serve my gentle, truthful and virtuous husbands. I consider their righteousness as so many poisonous snakes, capable of being enraged at a trifle.

My opinion is that to depend on one's husband is the eternal virtue of women. The husband is the wife's god. He is her sole refuge; there is no other refuge for her. How then could a wife act disagreeable to her husband?

In sleeping, eating or adorning my person, I never act against the wishes of my husbands. I never speak ill of my mother-in-law.

O blessed lady, my husbands have become obedient to me for my diligence, my alacrity and for the humility with which I serve my gurus.

Everyday, I personally wait food and drink and clothes upon the revered and truthful Kunti, the mother of my heroic husbands.

I never show any preference for myself over her in matters of food, attire and ornaments. I never reprove Kunti with words; she is equal to the Earth herself in forgiveness.

Satyabhama: O Draupadi, wife of the Pandavas, what household services did you take upon yourself, in order to please your husbands?

Draupadi: When Yudhisthira lived in Indraprastha, one hundred thousand elephants used to follow him. Such was the procession of Yudhisthira when he ruled over the earth.

O beautiful lady, those foremost of Bharatas, throwing upon me the burden of looking after all those that were to be fed by them, would always pay their court to me.

Eight thousand brahmanas were formerly fed in the palace of Yudhisthira, from plates of gold. Eighty thousand Snataka brahmanas, all leading domestic lives, were entertained by Yudhisthira with thirty maid-servants assigned to each. Besides these, ten thousand Yatis, with their desires under complete control, had their pure and well-cooked food carried to them on golden plates.

I worshipped duly all those Brahmnas who were the utterers of the Vedas with food, drink and clothes taken from the stores, after a portion had been dedicated to Srila Vyasadeva, the author of the Vedas.

The illustrious son of Kunti, Yudhisthira, had one hundred thousand well-dressed maidservants with bracelets on their arms and golden ornaments on their necks who duly used to serve the guests with plates of gold in their hands. They were also adorned with costly garments and gold in profusion and they were sprinkled with sandalwood paste. Decorated with gems and gold, they were all well-skilled in dancing and singing. I know the names and features of every one of those girls and also what they used to eat and what they used to wear and what they used not to do.

It was I who regulated their number and formed the rules to be observed in respect to them. It was I who satisfied any complaints that they had. I knew everything about the maidservants of the palace and other servants, even of the cowherds and shepherds of the royal household.

While my husbands were engaged in virtuous pursuits, I supervised their treasury, which was as inexhaustible as the abode of Varuna. O blessed and illustrious lady, it was I alone amongst the Pandavas who knew the real income and expenditures of the king and what their whole income was.

This load, so heavy and incapable of being born by persons of poor heart, I used to bear day and night, sacrificing my ease, all the while being affectionately devoted to them.

Day and night, bearing hunger and thirst, I used to wait upon the Kuru princes, so that my days and nights were the same to me. I used to rise from my bed first and go to my bed last. O Satyabhama, this has ever been my custom. This is the "great charm" ever known to me for making my husbands obedient to me. I have never used any charms of wicked women and I never wish to use them.

Satyabhama: O Panchala Princess, I am at fault - please forgive me! Among friends, conversations in jest naturally and without premeditation arise.

(Bhajan)